

THE SENATE MUST REFORM CLOTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, the American people have given our 45th President and the 115th Congress a clear mandate to revive our economy, secure our borders, restore our Nation's sovereignty, reinstate our Bill of Rights, and uphold the rule of law. Moreover, they have given us majorities in both Houses of Congress to do so. There is no excuse for failure.

President Obama and Secretary Clinton set a positive tone for this peaceful transition of power, a tone no doubt shared by many Members of Congress and many Americans of good will who did not vote on the prevailing side. This represents the best of American statesmanship.

Yet, we have also heard reactionary elements of the Democratic Party make a vicious pledge to thwart this mandate and destroy this President. One need look no further than Senator RED's disgraceful diatribe on Friday to realize that these threats far exceed the lunatic fringe now violently rioting in our streets.

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They reach directly into the Halls of Congress.

To fulfill the mandate of the American people, we will need to deliberate wisely and in good faith, with all sides participating in the discussion and all voices heard. But, ultimately, those deliberations must result in laws to fulfill that mandate. The agenda is daunting, and time is fleeting.

The greatest single obstacle to this era of reform is the 60-vote threshold to invoke cloture in the Senate, and I rise today to urge the Senate to finally reform it. Given the record of abuse of this rule and avowed intentions of many in that body, nothing will change legislatively unless the Senate Republican majority takes action when they organize in January. All the reforms that the American people called for, that the President will request, and that the House will pass will be stopped dead in the Senate.

Now, I don't argue to abandon this rule, but rather to restore it to its original purpose. Cloture is rooted in a sound and ancient parliamentary principle that, as long as one-third of a deliberative body wants to debate an issue, that debate should continue. After all, a minority exists to convince the majority of its way of thinking. This is the essence of deliberation.

But this principle assumes it is an actual debate where Members are talking to one another, and it requires that the debate be germane to the question at hand and that it is not dilatory. That is how cloture started. But over the 20th century, it degenerated into a 60-vote administrative threshold just to consider legislation. Ironically, a

procedure designed to protect debate has now morphed into a procedure that very effectively prevents debate.

The two Houses of Congress are designed to disagree with each other, but once the House and the Senate independently exercise their best judgment on a particular matter, there is a conference process developed over centuries to resolve their differences. This process cannot function if one House simply refuses to consider the other House's work.

The modern notion of cloture prevents that process and the system breaks down. During the last several Congresses, the House has sent hundreds of bills—including the appropriations bills that fund this government—to the Senate; but instead of amending their ideas into those bills or sending us bills of their own, they have simply refused to consider them by a minority denying cloture.

Now, some Senators have said that this mechanism is necessary to preserve collegiality and encourage compromise, but how can you have collegiality when one side simply refuses to talk to the other? How can you have compromise when the matter to be compromised cannot be taken up and discussed?

Others have said that since most legislation grows the powers of government, it is an effective brake on that tendency. It is true this rule effectively blocks bad legislation. It also very effectively blocks good legislation that is necessary to reverse this trend. The current cloture rule provides a ratcheting effect that locks in every expansion of government over the past century.

Now, some Republicans have said that it has been most useful when they have been in the minority. I have to ask them, do you want to be a successful majority or a successful minority? You cannot be both as long as cloture exists in its current form.

Voters elected Republican majorities in both Houses of Congress, and they expect action. They will get it from the President and from the House. But in order for the Senate to rise to this occasion, it must reform its cloture rule when it organizes in January.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PALM SPRINGS POLICE OFFICERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the lives of Palm Springs Officers Jose "Gil" Vega and Lesley Zerebny and to support the incredible law enforcement officers in my district. It is important to tell their story and forever record their heroism in our national RECORD.

Officers Vega and Zerebny were, tragically, shot and killed in the line of duty last month while responding to what seemed like a routine domestic disturbance in Palm Springs, California.

Officer Vega lived by the mantra of "To Serve and Protect." He graduated from Indio High School and joined the force in Palm Springs in 1982. He was always witty, quick to tell a joke and to offer guidance to new officers. He was an inspiration to friends, family, and countless people who knew him. The day he died, he was only 2 months away from retiring after 35 years of service.

He volunteered to pick up a shift on that day—on his day off. He is survived by his wife, Susana, nine children, and many grandchildren.

Officer Lesley Zerebny was new to the force, with a lifetime of service. She showed a passion for law enforcement and service her entire life, no doubt inherited from her father, a California Highway Patrol officer. She was raised in Hemet, California, and attended West Valley High School. As a young girl, she always stood up to bullies to protect others and for justice. She was also known for her pranks and her fun-loving spirit.

Officer Zerebny was a mother of a 4-month-old daughter, Cora. She had just returned from maternity leave when she was killed. She is survived by her husband Zack, a Riverside County Sheriff's Department officer, and by baby Cora.

Officer Vega and Officer Zerebny were two of California's finest. Their lives of service and spirit of community embody the values of law enforcement officers across our great Nation. Each day, men and women like Lesley and Gil wake up, kiss their families good-bye, and go to work knowing full well the risks they take to keep us safe. Spouses, children, and parents wonder if they will ever return that day.

Law enforcement officers see danger and they don't run from it; they run toward it to protect others. We are safer because of them. They and their families deserve our utmost gratitude for their service.

So on behalf of the people of California's 36th Congressional District, my wife, Monica, and my family, I want to thank Officer Vega and Officer Zerebny and their families for their ultimate sacrifice. Our hearts are with you, and our hearts are with all law enforcement brothers and sisters during their time of mourning. We mourn with you, and we continue to offer our deepest gratitude for your service. Your dedication and the risks you take each and every day will never be forgotten.

Officer Vega and Officer Zerebny, end of watch, October 8, 2016.

WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I have been on the floor so many times over the last year or so talking about the 16